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SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

May 11, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 2289 - UNKNOWN)
TAGS: OIIP, KMDR
Captions: None
Subject: MEDIA REACTION: PRESIDENT BUSH'S SPEECH AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA
Ref: None

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 02289

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: PAO
INFO: ECON POL AMB DCM
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ACTION: PAO

DISSEMINATION: PAO
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: PAO:KVANDEVATE
DRAFTED: PAO:AALKHATIB
CLEARED: PAO:TPONCE

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OO RUEHC RUENAAA RUEKJCS RUEHZM RUEHLO RUEHFR
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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9894
RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0660
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0714
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT
RUCJACC/USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//
RUCQSOC/USCINCSOC MACDILL AFB FL//PA//

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STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA;
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WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE; NSC
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA
USCINCENT FOR POLAD
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH; PARIS FOR O'FRIEL

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PRESIDENT BUSH'S SPEECH AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

11. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH'S ADDRESS CALLING FOR THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF U.S.-MIDDLE EAST FREE TRADE AREA RECEIVED PROMINENT COVERAGE IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA. ALL UAE DAILIES PUBLISHED LENGTHY EXCERPTS OF THE SPEECH, AND ABU DHABI TV, AL JAZEERA, AND AL ARABIYAH BROADCAST THE SPEECH LIVE. AN "AL KHALEEJ" EDITORIAL ASSERTED THAT THE VERACITY OF PRESIDENT BUSH'S PLAN FOR A NEW MIDDLE EAST IS DOUBTED BY MANY IN THE REGION. UNDER THE HEADLINE "CARROT AND STICK DIPLOMACY," A GULF NEWS EDITORIAL CLAIMED THAT BUSH'S PLAN WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED BY ARABS AND MUSLIMS. END SUMMARY.

12. COMMENTING ON PRESIDENT BUSH'S PLAN FOR A NEW MIDDLE EAST, SHARJAH-BASED PAN-ARAB DAILY "AL KHALEEJ" EDITORIALIZED 5/11:

"PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH'S PLAN FOR A NEW MIDDLE EAST AND HIS SUGGESTION TO ESTABLISH A U.S.-MIDDLE EAST FREE TRADE AREA BY THE YEAR 2013 GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF GOOD WILL AND AMERICAN CONCERN FOR THE REGION AND ITS PEOPLE ... BUT WHOEVER LOOKS CAREFULLY AT THIS PLAN AND ITS GOALS AND REFERS TO PAST U.S. POLICIES TOWARDS THE REGION ... THE PLAN RELIES ON PREVIOUS ISRAELI MINISTER SHIMON PEREZ'S PROPOSAL FOR A NEW MIDDLE EAST. THE PLAN IN THEORY WILL BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN TWO UNEQUAL SIDES, ECONOMICALLY AND MILITARILY. THIS PLAN IS TALKING ABOUT A REGION THAT STILL HAS CONFLICTS, MOST IMPORTANTLY THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, WHICH THE U.S. TREATS WITH TOTAL BIAS FOR ISRAEL AND SUPPORTS ITS RACIST AND AGGRESSIVE POLICIES ..."

"DOUBTS ARE INCREASING ABOUT THIS PLAN, SINCE IT COMES AT A TIME WHEN SOME ARAB COUNTRIES ARE PRESSURED TO GIVE IN TO THE DEMANDS AND CONDITIONS AIMING TO ELIMINATE THE STRENGTH AND RIGHT OF REFUSAL OF THESE COUNTRIES, DRIVING THEM TO OBEDIENCE, AND DISREGARDING THEIR RIGHTS. THIS PLAN NOW PUTS THE 'CART BEFORE THE HORSE,' BECAUSE ITS IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTS FIRST THAT THIS REGION SHOULD BE BLESSED WITH SECURITY, STABILITY, AND PEACE ... THE U.S. PLAN FOR A NEW MIDDLE EAST COMES AT THE WRONG TIME, EXCEPT IF THE U.S. THINKS THAT IT CAN IMPOSE ISRAEL ON THE REGION ... IF THE U.S. IS SERIOUS ABOUT ESTABLISHING A NEW MIDDLE EAST THAT IS ECONOMICALLY PROSPEROUS AND BLESSED WITH THE LIBERTY AND DEMOCRACY PRESIDENT BUSH TALKS ABOUT, IT (THE U.S.) SHOULD IMMEDIATELY START BY REQUIRING THAT ISRAEL IMPLEMENT THE INTERNATIONAL DECISIONS IN ORDER TO REACH A JUST, COMPREHENSIVE, AND LASTING PEACE ... OR ELSE THESE PLANS WILL ONLY AIM TO BEAUTIFY THE U.S.'S IMAGE IN THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE OF THE REGION."

13. UNDER THE HEADLINE "CARROT AND STICK DIPLOMACY," ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EXPATRIATE-ORIENTED "GULF NEWS" EDITORIALIZED 5/11:

"... AMERICAN PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH HAS OUTLINED A MIDEAST TRADE PLAN. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO HAVE MIDDLE EAST NATIONS SIGN UP TO A U.S.-BACKED TRADE INITIATIVE, GIVING SUCH NATIONS SPECIAL TERMS, PRESUMABLY ON A QUID PRO QUO BASIS. YET, THERE IS MORE TO THIS INITIATIVE THAN MERE BUSINESS ... THE UNDERLYING REASON IS FOR THE ARAB WORLD TO IMPROVE - OR CHANGE - ITS POLITICAL STRUCTURES AND SEE DEMOCRACY IN ARAB NATIONS, TOGETHER WITH GREATER HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS."

"WHILST MANY MIDDLE EAST NATIONS MAY WELCOME THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPROVING TRADE WITH THE U.S., EVERY ARAB AND MUSLIM NATION WILL OBJECT STRONGLY TO THE METHOD EMPLOYED TO ATTRACT SUCH PARTICIPATION. FOR IT REQUIRES FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES NOT ONLY IN SOCIETY AND THE RULE OF LAW BUT, FAR MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE VERY INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM. THIS IS BECAUSE ARAB MUSLIM LAW AND SOCIETY IS BASED ON THE HOLY QURAN, SO ANY MODIFICATIONS TO THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE HOLY QURAN SHOULD CERTAINLY NOT BE MADE BY AN OUTSIDE POWER - A WESTERN ONE AT THAT - AND DEFINITELY NOT COERCED BY THE PROSPECT OF INCREASED TRADE. THE RELIGION, HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE REGION CAN BE TRACED BACK FARTHER THAN THAT OF AMERICA; IT IS THE FAILURE OF SUCCESSIVE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATIONS TO UNDERSTAND THE THEORY OF SUCH CONCEPTS THAT DEPICTS THEIR DESIRE TO IMPOSE THE "AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE" WHERE IT IS NOT WANTED."

ALBRIGHT